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UNCLAS ANKARA 001510

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR E, EB/IFD, EB/CBA, INL/C/CP, EB/ESC/TFS, S/CT, AND
EUR/SE
TREASURY FOR OASIA - JLEICHTER AND MMILLS, AND OFAC DIRECTOR
NSC FOR GPETERS, MBRYZA AND TMCKIBBEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: EFIN ECON PREL PGOV PTER TU

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH FINANCE MINISTER:
TERRORISM FINANCE

¶1. (Sbu) At a meeting March 9 with Finance Minister Kemal Unakitan, the Ambassador stressed the importance of strengthening Turkey's regime for combatting the financing of terrorism. In this context, the Ambassador raised the Global Relief Foundation/Marwan Haddad case, about which the Department of Justice had made a formal request under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). The Ambassador passed a copy of the MLAT request to Minister Unakitan, in which the U.S. requests information on accounts in Turkey into which the Global Relief Foundation--an entity with ties to Al-Qaeda--transferred funds. The Ambassador pointed out that the U.S. was only interested in tracking the links to these accounts, and was not interested in the other issues relating to the Turkish bank in question, Al-Baraka Turk. Note: As a former board member of Al-Baraka, some post contacts alleged Unakitan was blocking cooperation with the U.S on this case. End Note. The Ambassador also mentioned that the team of U.S. experts who had visited Turkey in November was working on a draft report on Turkey's anti-terrorist financing regime.

¶2. (Sbu) Unakitan replied that the GOT attached great importance to cooperation in counter- terrorism including combatting terrorist financing. Though the Ambassador had raised a number of other topics (reported septel), at the end of the meeting Unakitan said he was most interested in the terrorism finance issue. He recommended the Embassy keep close contacts with the Turkish anti-money laundering agency, MASAK, and praised MASAK's Acting Director. Referring to the proposed legislation regarding MASAK, the Minister said that the law would strengthen MASAK's ability to fight terrorism financing.

EDELMAN